

# **ADDENDUM TO AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT BUTTERFIELD BOULEVARD AND CHANNEL EXTENSION PROJECT**

**August 2005**

## **PURPOSE OF THE ADDENDUM**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) recognizes that between the date projects are approved and the date they are constructed, one or more of the following changes may occur: 1) the scope of the project may change; 2) the environmental setting in which the project is located may change; 3) certain environmental laws, regulations or policies may change; and 4) previously unknown information can arise. CEQA requires that lead agencies evaluate these changes to determine whether or not there would be any changes in environmental impacts or required mitigation measures. CEQA allows Lead Agencies to prepare an Addendum to a previously certified Environmental Impact Report (EIR), when it can be demonstrated that changes to a project, and the environmental impacts from such changes, are minor when compared to the original scope of the project and the original environmental impacts (CEQA Sections 15164 and 15162).

The City of Morgan Hill City Council certified the "Sutter Boulevard Extension & Flood Protection Facilities" Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) on November 4, 1992. In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines and the City of Morgan Hill's requirements for the preparation of environmental documents, the purpose of this Addendum is to disclose the environmental impacts associated with the proposed changes to the "Butterfield Boulevard Extension and Flood Protection Facilities" project.<sup>1</sup>

## **BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES**

### **I. *Background***

The previously certified "Sutter Boulevard Extension & Flood Protection Facilities" FEIR (1992 FEIR) evaluated the extension of Sutter Boulevard from Cochrane Road to Middle Avenue, the extension of Watsonville Road to Sutter Boulevard, and the construction of a drainage channel on the eastern side of Sutter Boulevard that empties into a 27.6 acre detention basin located between Maple Avenue and Pollard Avenue. As stated on page 11 of the 1992 FEIR, the project would be phased and the portion of the project south of Tenant Avenue (including the detention pond and the Watsonville Road connection) was not anticipated to be completed before 2010.

In 1992, the Morgan Hill City Council approved a plan line for Butterfield (Sutter) Boulevard and the drainage channel from Cochrane Road to Tennant Avenue. The construction of Butterfield Boulevard and the drainage channel is complete from Cochrane Road to Tenant Avenue. The roadway and channel currently end approximately 50 feet south of Tennant Avenue.

### **II. *Proposed Changes to the Project***

The project proposes to connect Butterfield Boulevard to Watsonville Road and complete the construction of the Butterfield Channel and detention basin. The proposed project is identical to the project evaluated in the 1992 FEIR, except for the following modifications: 1) the number of vehicle

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<sup>1</sup> Since the certification of the 1992 FEIR, Sutter Boulevard was renamed Butterfield Boulevard.

travel lanes on the Watsonville Road extension is increased from two lanes to three lanes in each direction; 2) the Watsonville Road at-grade crossing of the existing Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) line is replaced with an overpass; and 3) the alignment of Watsonville Road is slightly modified to create a continuous connection with Butterfield Boulevard. Site plans of the project evaluated in the 1992 FEIR and the currently proposed project are shown on Figures 1 and 2, respectively.

### **Additional Vehicle Lanes**

The project proposes three vehicle travel lanes in each direction on the Watsonville Road extension. Compared to the project evaluated in the 1992 FEIR, this is an increase of one travel lane in each direction and will require an additional 28 feet of right-of-way, increasing the typical amount of right-of-way required for the Watsonville Road extension from 92 feet to 120 feet.

### **Railroad Overpass**

The Watsonville Road extension to Butterfield Boulevard will cross the existing UPRR line. The project proposes an overpass crossing of the UPRR line instead of an at-grade crossing, which was previously proposed and evaluated in the 1992 FEIR. The roadway extension will remain at-grade until approximately 525 feet before and after the UPRR line. The maximum height of the railroad overpass will be 30 feet. The construction of the overpass will require additional right-of-way compared to the previously evaluated at-grade crossing in order to construct the foundation to support the elevated roadway. The right-of-way width required to construct the overpass will be approximately 240 feet.

### **Butterfield Boulevard/Watsonville Road Connection**

Compared to the approved project, the proposed connection of Butterfield Boulevard and Watsonville Road will be continuous instead of connecting at a T intersection. The proposed Watsonville Road/Butterfield Boulevard alignment is shown on Figure 2.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PROJECT**

The discussion below describes the environmental impacts of the proposed changes to the approved project.

### **I. *Aesthetics***

The Watsonville Road/Butterfield Boulevard connection would traverse a generally flat, agricultural area of cultivated farmland. As stated on page 69 of the 1992 FEIR, the approved project would result in a significant and unavoidable visual/aesthetic impact, due to the introduction of a roadway in an area where one currently does not exist.

Compared to the approved project, the proposed changes to the roadway will incrementally increase the visibility of the project from the surrounding area. Specifically, the Watsonville Road extension will be 28 feet wider and the UPRR overpass will be approximately 30 feet tall and, therefore, will be more visible from the surrounding area than a narrower, at-grade roadway. Although the profile of the roadway at the UPRR overpass will be taller, the proposed project will not block views of scenic resources (i.e., hillsides bordering the valley) from a designated scenic highway or other prominent viewpoints. This incremental increase in visibility from the surrounding area, therefore, is not

substantial when compared to the original scope of the project and the impacts disclosed in the 1992 FEIR.

## **II.     *Agricultural Resources***

The 1992 FEIR concluded that the approved project would have a significant and unavoidable agricultural resources impact, due to the loss of 84 acres of Prime Farmland. The proposed changes to the project will result in the loss of approximately five additional acres of Prime Farmland compared to the approved project. The increase is due to the additional right-of-way needed to construct the railroad overpass and the extra travel lanes on the Watsonville Road extension. The incremental increase in the loss of prime farmland that will result from the proposed changes is not substantial when compared to the original scope of the approved project and the farmland impact disclosed in the 1992 FEIR.

## **III.    *Land Use***

Compared to the approved project, the proposed changes to the project will not increase the severity of previously disclosed land use impacts or result in land use impacts that were not disclosed in the 1992 FEIR. The proposed project is consistent with applicable land use plans and policies, including the City of Morgan Hill General Plan. The proposed changes will not divide an established community or conflict with any habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

## **IV.    *Air Quality***

According to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), the entire Bay Area is in attainment for carbon monoxide. The proposed changes to the project will not generate vehicle trips. The additional travel lane in each direction on the extension of Watsonville Road will not substantially increase carbon monoxide levels in the project area or exceed state standards; therefore, the changes to the project would not result in significant long-term air quality impacts. Implementation of standard construction dust control measures will reduce short-term air quality impacts that may result during the construction of the proposed project to a less than significant level. For these reasons, the proposed changes to the project will not substantially increase or result in air quality impacts that were not identified in the 1992 FEIR.

## **V.     *Biological Resources***

The proposed changes to the project will primarily affect farmland and a small amount of developed habitat. No trees will be removed as a result of the proposed changes. Less than five additional acres of farmland and less than one additional acre of developed habitat will be paved as a result of widening the Watsonville Road extension from two to three lanes in each direction. This additional loss of farmland and developed habitats would not result in new impacts or substantially increase the severity of the impacts disclosed in the 1992 FEIR.

Ground squirrel burrows are present within the proposed roadway alignment, however, no Burrowing Owls or signs of Burrowing Owls (e.g., excrement, pellets, and/or feathers) were observed along the proposed alignment during the site visit completed on May 23, 2005. Subsequent to the certification of the 1992 FEIR, the City of Morgan Hill adopted a Citywide Burrowing Owl Mitigation Plan. This plan requires Burrowing Owl mitigation for all projects within the City of Morgan Hill that occur on land below 600 feet elevation and support grassland and/or mixed herbaceous vegetation. All future project construction will conform to the requirements of the Citywide Burrowing Owl Habitat

Mitigation Plan, including but not limited to a preconstruction survey to determine the presence or absence of burrowing owl habitat and to avoid a “take” during grading or clearing of the land. For these reasons, the proposed changes will not significantly impact Burrowing Owls.

## **VI. Cultural Resources**

The Cultural Resources Assessment completed for the approved project in 1991 did not identify any known cultural resources within the project alignment. The report concluded that three structures located north of Barrett Avenue need to be evaluated by a qualified architectural historian prior to demolition or relocation of the structures and the possibility remains to uncover buried cultural resources during construction. Therefore, standard mitigation measures were proposed by the project to reduce the potential for impacts to cultural resources to a less than significant level.

Due to the time that has passed since the completion of the Cultural Resources Assessment and because the project now proposes to realign and widen the Watsonville Road extension, the Cultural Resource Assessment was updated by *Basin Research Associates* in June 2005 and a Historical and Architectural Evaluation of structures over 50 years old within the roadway aligned was prepared by *Urban Programmers* in July 2005. Copies of these reports are included as Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

### **Updated Cultural Resources Assessment**

The updated cultural resources assessment included a field reconnaissance of all accessible parcels within the roadway alignment and an archival records search. The parcels surveyed are listed in Appendix A. The assessment concludes that the project area has a low to moderate potential for buried archaeological resources and there are no known archaeological resources within or adjacent to the proposed alignment.

One parcel that appears to be adjacent to the roadway alignment (APN 817-007-021) was not surveyed as permission to access the property was not given. In the event the project were to encroach onto this parcel, a field review would be required.

### **Historical and Architectural Evaluation**

Three parcels (APNs 817-06-004, 817-07-006, and 817-08-009) within the proposed project alignment contain structures that are over 50 years old. Because structures over 50 years old may be eligible for the California Register of Historic Places, a Historical and Architectural Evaluation of the three parcels was completed.

In order to be eligible for the California Register of Historic Places one of the following four criteria must be met:

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history;
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or

4. It has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nations.

None of the study parcels are listed in the Morgan Hill Inventory of Cultural Resources or the Santa Clara County Heritage Resource Inventory. Research did not uncover that any of the buildings meet any of the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historic Places. For these reasons, the proposed project will not impact a historic resource.

## **VII. *Geology and Soils***

As stated in the 1992 FEIR and confirmed with updated geotechnical data, the only geotechnical concern in the project area is the presence of moderate to highly expansive soils. The project area is not within a fault rupture, liquefaction, compressible soil, or landslide hazard zone (Santa Clara County, Geologic Hazard Zone Maps, October 19, 2004).

The proposed changes to the project will not increase the severity or result in geologic impacts that were not disclosed in the 1992 FEIR. Standard engineering and design techniques will reduce the risk of damage to the proposed roadway and drainage improvements resulting from expansive soils to a less than significant level. A site-specific geologic study will be completed prior to construction of the proposed project. The final design of the proposed roadway and drainage improvements will incorporate all measures identified in the site-specific geologic study. For these reasons, the proposed changes to the project will not substantially increase or result in geology and soils impacts that were not identified in the 1992 FEIR.

## **VIII. *Hydrology***

The 1992 FEIR concludes on page 60 that the project would reduce flooding in the project area and will not affect existing floodplains. When compared to the previously approved project, the proposed changes to the project will result in a minor increase of impervious surfaces. Despite the minor increase, the project would continue to result in a beneficial impact on flooding conditions due to the completion of the detention basin. The additional runoff resulting from the proposed changes will not substantially increase the severity of a previously identified impact or result in an unidentified impact.

## **IX. *Noise***

The noise analysis completed for the approved project and summarized on pages 32 through 43 of the 1992 FEIR concludes that future traffic volumes on the Butterfield Boulevard and Watsonville Road alignment will substantially increase noise levels in the project area. Noise mitigation measures identified in the 1992 FEIR consisted of the construction of eight-foot soundwalls between the proposed roadway and nearby existing residential uses. Eleven soundwalls were proposed by the project. The proposed soundwalls ranged in length from 230 feet to 750 feet. For some significant noise impacts, mitigation was not feasible or practicable because the distance between the impacted residential uses and the proposed roadway was too great. Therefore, the 1992 FEIR concludes that the project would result in a significant unavoidable noise impact, due to noise level increases along the roadway alignment (page 69).

### **Vehicle Traffic Noise**

The proposed realignment and addition of a vehicle travel lane in each direction to the Watsonville Road extension will increase noise levels at three existing residential uses. Based on review of the noise analysis prepared for the approved project, it is estimated that noise levels will increase approximately one to two decibels above the project noise levels disclosed in the certified FEIR (i.e., from 64 dBA Ldn to approximately 65 of 66 dBA Ldn. This increase is estimate based on the placement of the vehicle travel lanes up to 250 feet closer to the residential uses and the increased vehicle capacity of the Watsonville Road extension. The location of affected residential uses is shown on Figure 3.

Compared to the approved project, the proposed changes to the project will incrementally increase the severity of a previously disclosed significant unavoidable traffic noise impact. As a result of the proposed changes in the roadway alignment, noise levels at three existing residential uses will increase approximately one to two decibels. The human ear cannot notice noise level changes below three decibels. For these reasons, it is concluded that the incremental noise increase that will result from the proposed changes in the project will not severely increase a previously identified noise impact or result in a noise impact that was not disclosed in the 1992 FEIR. The 1992 FEIR concluded that project noise levels at these three affected residential uses would be significant and unavoidable, because the distance between the residences and the roadway was too great for mitigation (soundwalls) to be effective. Due to the distance between the extension of Watsonville Road and the existing residences (125-150 feet), mitigation continues to not be affective at this location.

### **Train Traffic Noise**

Compared to the approved project, construction of the railroad overpass will reduce noise levels in the project area, because passing trains will not be required to sound their whistle and a railroad crossing gate with bells will not be operated at this location.

## **X. *Population and Housing***

As described in the 1992 FEIR, the construction of the entire Butterfield Boulevard extension and flood control improvement project would result in the displacement of 11 residences, two mobile homes, and one business. The FEIR identified this as a significant unavoidable impact. The proposed changes to the project will result in the removal of one additional residence and a portion of a greenhouse, due to the realignment and widening of the Watsonville Road extension. The removal of one additional residence and a portion of a greenhouse will not displace a substantial number of people, businesses, or housing. The proposed changes would not substantially increase the severity of a previously disclosed impact or result in an impact that was not identified in the 1992 FEIR.

## **XI. *Transportation/Traffic***

The traffic impact analysis completed for the approved project concluded that the extension of Butterfield Boulevard would generally improve traffic conditions in the project area, especially along Monterey Road. Traffic impacts were identified at the following three intersections: Butterfield Boulevard and Main Avenue; Butterfield Boulevard and Dunne Avenue; and Butterfield Boulevard and Tennant Avenue.

Compared to the approved project evaluated in the 1992 FEIR, the changes proposed by the project will not adversely affect traffic operations in the project area. The addition of a vehicle travel lane in

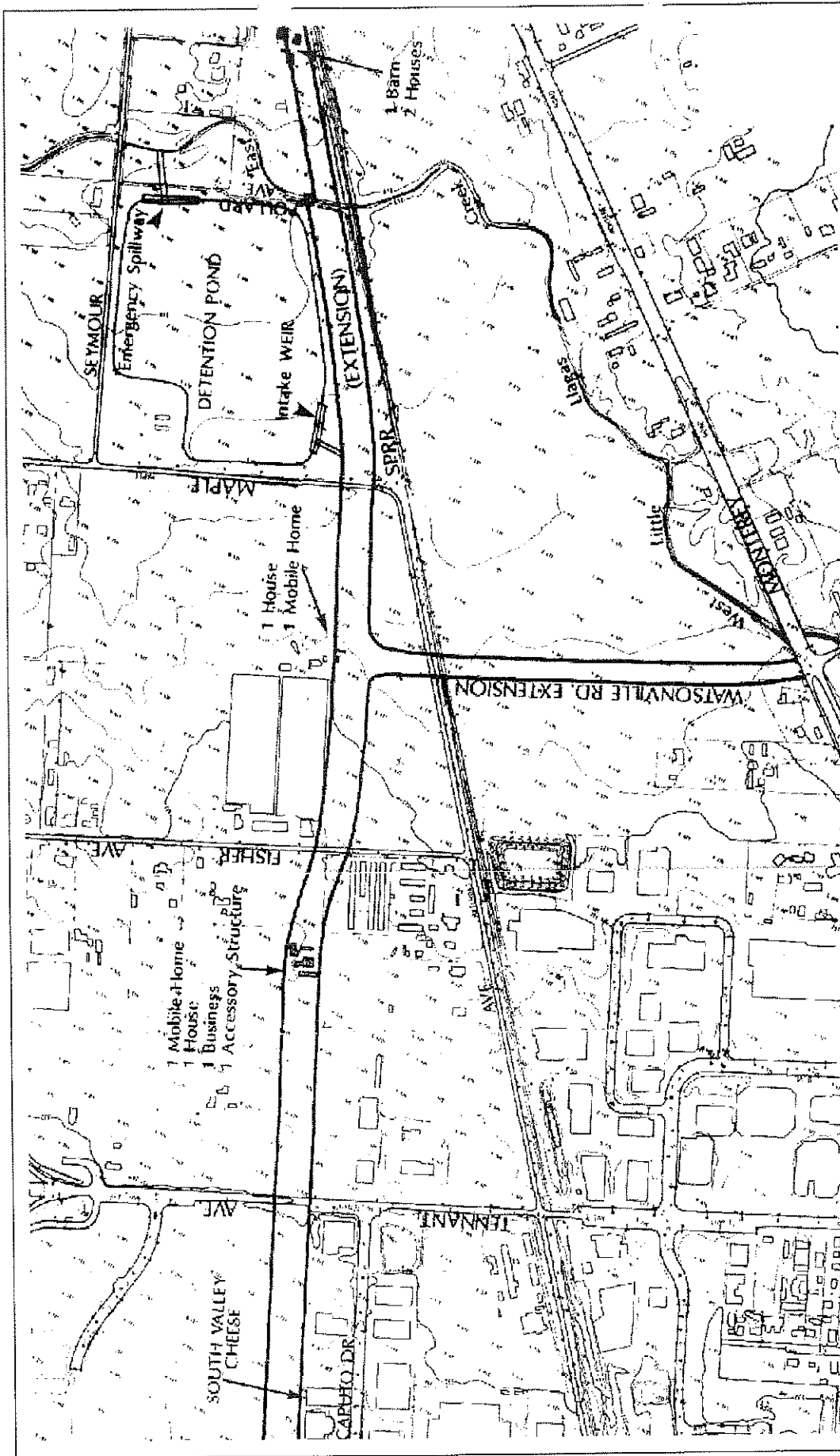
each direction, a railroad overpass, and realignment of the Watsonville Road extension to allow for a continuous connection to Butterfield Boulevard will improve roadway operations by allowing traffic to travel unimpeded between Tenant Avenue and Monterey Road. The changes are proposed to serve existing and planned future development and, therefore, will not increase vehicle traffic. The proposed changes to the project will improve roadway safety by replacing the planned the at-grade railroad crossing with a grade separation. For these reasons, the proposed project will not increase the severity of previously disclosed transportation impacts or result in an unidentified transportation impacts.

## CONCLUSION

Based upon this assessment, it is concluded that the proposed changes to the project would not result in any new environmental impacts, nor would the magnitude of previously identified environmental impacts be substantially different from those associated with the originally approved project. As described above, the proposed changes to the project will include mitigation measures to reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts. For these reasons, an Addendum is the appropriate document to enter this new information into the administrative record for the project and no further environmental review is required or warranted under CEQA.

  
Director of Community Development, Planning Division

2-7-06  
Date



PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED PROJECT

FIGURE 1



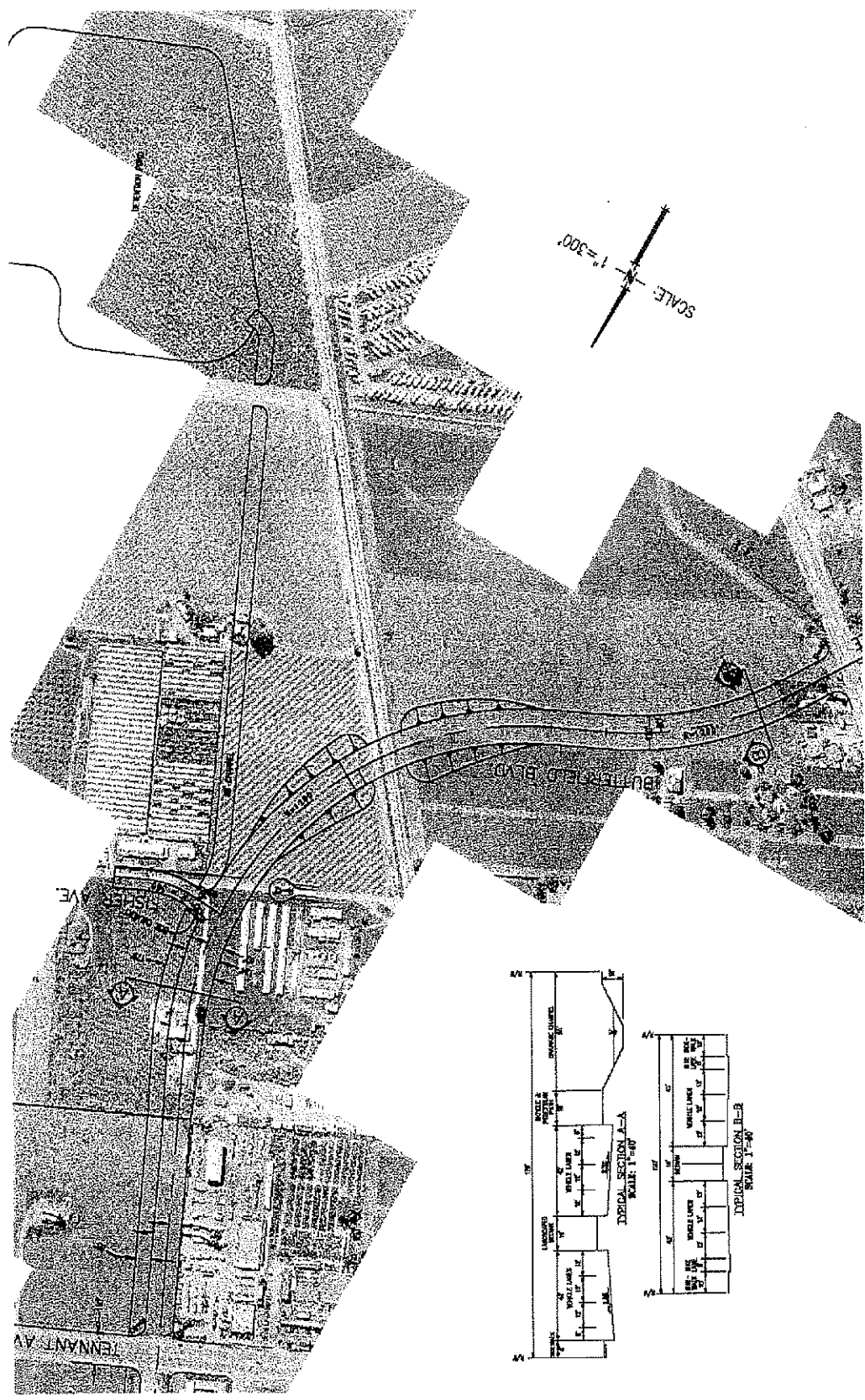


FIGURE 2

PROPOSED PROJECT